Alternative F - Stand Condition Stratified Treatment

The goal of this alternative is to provide a method for meeting all fire hazard reduction needs and improving stand health by considering the need for post-treatment stand diversity. Similar stands would be identified based on species composition characteristics. Stands would be treated according to specific prescriptions. Target maximum basal area would range from:

0 – 40 ft2/acre in the juniper dominated stands, approximately 352 acres
40 – 60 ft2/acre in the ponderosa pine dominated stands, approximately 883 acres
60 – 80 ft2/acre in the mixed conifer (ponderosa/Douglas-fir) dominated stands, approximately 315 acres
80 – 100 ft2/acre in the Douglas-fir dominated stands, approximately 300 acres

Rather than a strict basal area goal, target basal areas would be more flexible to reflect individual stand compositions. Wildlife hiding cover, in the form of small "thickets" would be retained in conifer units (approximately 185 acres). In addition, in the event that thinning does not reduce beetle –kill to normal levels, a re-entry to remove additional dead/dying trees would be planned only if the number of dead trees poses a considerable fuel risk, otherwise dead and dying trees would become snags for use by wildlife.

Treatment would target dead/dying beetle infested trees and then juniper, followed by a thin to meet target basal areas. Leave trees would maintain the pre-treatment proportion of pine, fir and hardwood species. Western juniper would also be targeted for removal from the project area since it was minimally present in the late 1800s. Larger juniper (over 20 inches DBH) and those found on rockier, fire-resistant sites would be retained, with all other juniper cut and removed, or piled for burning. Tree removal would be done using ground based yarding (619 acres) and aerial based yarding (1231 acres). On slopes greater than 35 percent, an aerial yarding system capable of full suspension of logs would be required. On slopes less than 35 percent, yarding would be accomplished by a ground based yarding system capable of one end log suspension. Whole-tree logging practices would be implemented, with trees less than 7 inches diameter piled for burning.

The 'pit' area would be closed at the county road entrance to vehicles over 50 inches in width to discourage garbage dumping within the 'pit' area while still accommodating motorcycle and off-highway vehicle (OHV) use. A parking area would remain at the entrance. The 'pit' would also be buffered by a 100-250 foot non-treatment area to provide a line-of-site barrier and maintain the ability to use vegetation for future management such as trail designation and closure.

Curl-leaf mountain mahogany (CMM) would be thinned from the majority of the units. This shrub was not common in the mid-1800s, and shrubs that were present were healthier than the stands present on LCM today. Individual shrubs in the eastern portion of the project area would be untreated until the area is burned through prescription in the future. Dense, decadent stands on the top of LCM and on the western slopes would be thinned to reduce the continuous fuel loads.